completion of Phase One of NSSP was announced in a Joint Statement on 17 September, 2004 during Foreign Secretary's visit to US. Since then both countries have started discussions to proceed further onto the next phase.

(c) NSSP sets the direction for further development of the Indo-U.S. strategic partnership and provides the framework for the two nations to work together in critical areas to mutual benefit.

Indo-Pak discussions

†750. SHRI R.S. GAVAI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the discussions taken place during last three years between India Pakistan; and

(b) the subjects that would come for discussion in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (b) Following the terrorist attack on Parliament on December 13, 2001, India had taken a number of steps, including the recall of the High Commissioner, termination of Delhi-Lahore bus service, Samjhauta Express, air links, and reduction in size of respective High Commissions. India also impressed upon Pakistan the need to put an end to cross border infiltration and terrorism, and to dismantle the infrastructure of support to terrorism in Pakistan on a permanent basis.

Later, after India extended the hand of friendship to Pakistan in April 2003, and based on the commitment given by President Musharraf on January 6, 2004 not to permit any territory under Pakistan's control to be used to support terrorism in any manner, the Composite Dialogue was resumed. Steps were taken to normalize diplomatic and other links. Within the framework of the Composite Dialogue, discussions were held on the subjects of Peace and Security including CBMs, Jammu and Kashmir, Siachen, Sir Creek, Tulbul Navigation Project, Terrorism and Drug Trafficking, Economic and Commercial Cooperation, and Promotion of Friendly Exchanges in Various Fields. India made a large number of proposals for confidence building, interaction and cooperation.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

A number of technical meeting on various subjects were also held, including on opening new routes and communication links, and between BSF and Pakistan Rangers, and Narcotics control authorities on the issues related to border management, and combating the menace of drug trafficking and smuggling.

The Foreign Ministers of India and Pakistan met in New Delhi on September 5-6, 2004 to review overall progress in the Composite Dialogue. They exchange views on carrying the process forward in an atmosphere free from terrorism and violence. The two Ministers agreed to a number of technical level meetings on various subjects, including expert level meetings on Conventional and Nuclear CBMs, *inter alia,* to discuss the draft agreement on advance notification of missile tests; meeting between Indian Border Security Force (BSF) and Pakistan Rangers; meeting between railway authorites on the Munnabao-Khokhrapar rail link; meeting between Narcotics Control Authorities, including for finalisation of an MOU; meeting between the Indian Coast Guards and the Pakistan Maritime Security Agency to, *inter alia*, discuss the Memoranum of Understanding for establishing communication link between them; and meeting on all issues related to commencement of a bus service between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad. They also agreed to the establishment of a Committee of Experts to consider issues related to trade; a Joint Survey of the boundary pillars in the horizontal segment of the international boundary in the Sir Creek area; addition of a new category of Tourist Visa in the visa regime between the two countries, and to promote group tourism; set up a mechanism to deal with the issue of civilian prisoners and firshermen, effectively and speedily; undertake further measures for facilitation of visits to religious shrines, and upkeep of historical sites; implement the outcome of the August 2004 meeting of Defence Secretaries; and enhanced interaction and exchanges among the respective Foreign Offices, including study tours of young diplomats/probationers to each other's country.

They, *inter alia*, agreed to continue with the serious and sustained dialogue, and reiterated the confidence that the Composite Dialogue will lead to peaceful settlement of all bilateral issues to the satisfaction of both sides.

The prcoess has been taken forward through high level meetings and visits, including the meeting between Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and President Musharraf in New York on September 24, 2004 and the visit

of the Prime Minister of Pakistan to New Delhi on November 23-24, 2004 in his capacity as the Chairperson of SAARC. Foreign Secretaries of the two countries are expected to meet in December, 2004 to initiate the next round of the Composite Dialogue.

Help to Sri Lanka

751. SHRI S.P.M. SYED KHAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Sri Lankan Government have sought our help to upgrade the Sri Lankan Air Force's strategic military-cum-civil airport in Jaffna;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether Government have taken a decision on the Sri Lankan Government's request?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNALAFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) Yes.

(b) Indian cooperation has been sought in resurfacing the airfield.

(c) The matter is under consideration.

Indo-China border issue

752. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has taken up the issue of border with China; and

(b) if so, the progress achieved so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNALAFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) Yes.

(b) The Special Representatives of India and China on the Boundary Question are exploring the framework of a boundary settlement from the political perspective of the overall bilateral relationship. Simultaneously, the India-China Joint Working Group is engaged in seeking clarification of the Line of Actual Control in the India-China border areas. Both sides have expressed commitment to maintain peace and tranquility in the border areas, pending an ultimate settlement of the boundary question.